

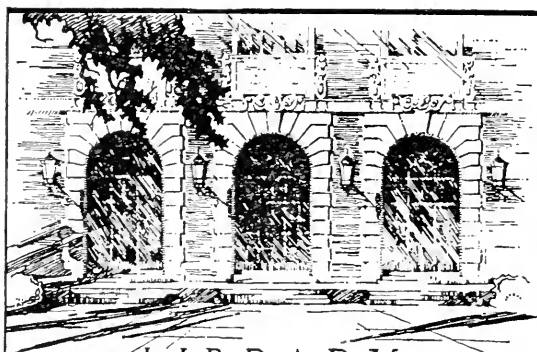
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ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SURVEY

HISTORY OF GIRARD, ILLINOIS



"from then 'til now"

1855 . 1955

OLD-TIME VIEWS

THE GIRARD HOUSE BUILT IN 1854



This photo of The Girard House is the oldest in this booklet. Lent by Miss Daisy Yerington, who was born there, it shows what an imposing hotel this was for a small town. It was built in 1854 on the northeast corner of the square.



Another landmark for many years was torn down in 1923. Its bell summoned both high school and grade pupils to the same building: Girard's public school. It was located where the present West grade school stands.

OLD-TIME VIEWS

Fire on North Side of Square August 1884



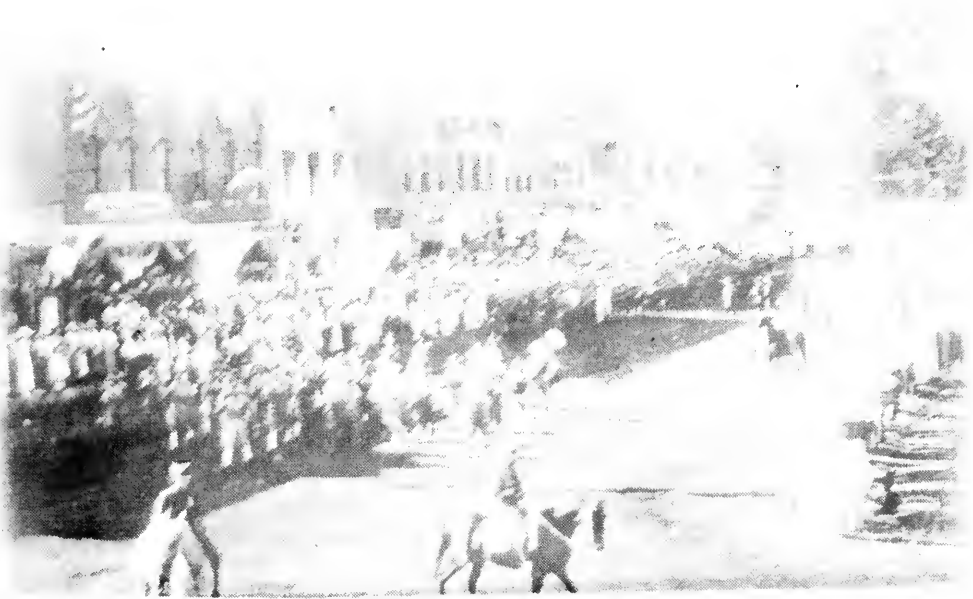
The street was littered with furnishings carried out of the burning frame buildings. This view is looking east on Center street, the grocery store at left front being the present bank corner.



This disastrous fire destroyed a large section of the business houses on the north side. Like many such events, it speeded the modernization process, for brick buildings soon replaced the old frame structures. Notice the fence around the park, necessary to keep out the livestock.

OLD-TIME VIEWS

Homecoming Parade 1919



Girard's biggest community celebration of its first century was the Soldiers and Sailors Homecoming on August 7, 1919. Part of the grand parade, almost a mile long, is shown here at the southwest corner of the square.

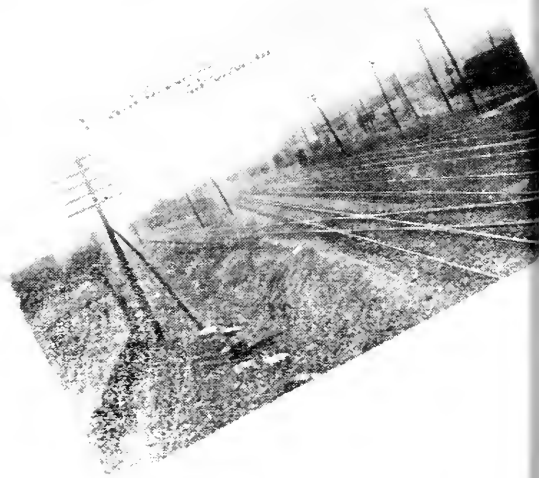
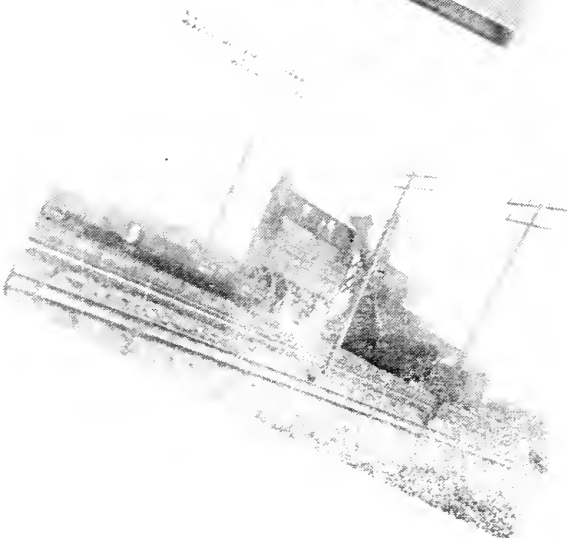


The Corn Carnival was a popular fall event during the early 1900's. This parade is pictured in the same location as the later Homecoming parade (above).

OLD-TIME VIEWS

In the horse and buggy days, the Girard stores had "porches" in the front. These views show the north and west sides of the square.

Girard's coal mine (lower left) was closed in February 1923. The first mine had been sunk in 1869. Its tippie and outbuildings burned in 1873 and were rebuilt.



HISTORY OF GIRARD, ILLINOIS

“from then ‘til now”

1855 . 1955

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Historical Committee

Mrs. L. T. Weddle, Historian

Howerton Tipton

H. V. Stutsman

Mrs. Edgar Davidson, advisor

Printed by The Girard Gazette

DEDICATION POEM

G I R A R D

Girard the city, we honor this year
Was founded by men with vision most clear;
While animals were wild: and still roamed untamed,
For a man named Girard, our fair town was named.

In a broad prairie country, we then set our stage
And now we turn back the fond history's page;
To find there great men, who possessed courage fine,
For a hundred long years, all down the line.

Reverence for God, in this country so grand,
They cleared off the forests, and tilled the rich land;
And founded our schools, and built homes secure,
That the ages of testing, and time would endure.

A good business center, now here is found,
A beautiful park, with its grass covered ground;
Its spacious wide streets, and all types of labor,
A city where truly, each one loves his neighbor.

Rich is its soil, with a deep floor of coal,
The finest in livestock and grain is its goal;
Regard for the churches, and good education,
Has given our city, its place in the Nation.

Due West of our city, just a wee little way,
We find here the triumph and pride of our day:
'Tis silvery Lake Sunset, with its tall shady trees,
And its murmuring waves, and soft balmy breeze.

1855 So this is our city, long tried and true,
And its heartiest welcome, it now gives to you:
Enjoy every moment, sincerely we pray,
As old friends together, on this happy day.

1955 Then here's to Girard, the cherished home town,
With beard, hat and tie, and long flowing gown:
For the century passed, we now shed no tears,
But in joy we look forth, to the next hundred years.

The History of Girard 1855-1955

Chapter 1

In the Beginning: 1829-1854

This is the story of a part of Black Hawk's hunting ground, a part of the prairies that once swept out of the east into the timbered water courses of the head waters of the "Macoupina". It was this fertile spot on "The Grand Prairie" that became known as Macoupin County, Illinois, in the year 1829.

Not a town had been established within the bounds of this county, the name of which means "white potato", or "plenty". A few peaceful Indians were even yet enjoying life in their village on the site of the Oak Leaf Country Club near Girard. These natives were probably one of the Illini tribes, a people who were a mixed group of Peorias, Mitchigames, Kickapoos, Winnebagos or Pottawanomies.

These Indians declared to the first settlers that this was a spot favored by the "Great Spirit", for here "no cyclone would ever blow".

It is plain that an enterprising Frenchman by the name of Girard (first name unknown) also came at a very early date, building a sawmill on the timbered banks of the stream which was so soon to be called Mill Creek. Legend says that Girard's Mill was located on the creek at the foot of Ashbaugh Hill, west of the entrance of Oak Leaf Country Club.

Following the streams up into the edge of the prairies, the settlers first came from the south and west, by way of Alton.

Wherever there were trees, cottonwood, willows, sycamores, oak, maple, wild cherry or locust, the men stopped and took up claims from the government and built cabins. At first it was only a fool who would build on the prairie grass land. A man could get lost in that terrible grass and if fire got into the dry September stems, a prairie fire was inevitable. Then too, the wood supply should be near at hand.

So it was that by 1831 Mr. Girard had near neighbors by the name of Thos. Warren, Jesse Ashlock, William and Charles Cox and Matthew Harlan, all living in the west edge of the site which was to become Girard Township.

By 1834 other men ventured a bit farther into the prairie, and the names of W. T. Bristow, Daniel Black, Elisha Smith, Dr. Edwards and Colonel George Mather joined the neighborhood.

With the settlers becoming more numerous, a stage line from Springfield to Alton now became a profitable venture as well as a transportation necessity. Following an old Indian trail, this line became well traveled, and John Henderson settled about one and one-half miles north of the present site of Girard. There in 1835 Mr. Henderson established a "stage stand", and the creak of the stage coach and the snap of the driver's whip became a part of the local scene. This line was then known as the Alton Way and was to become, in 1921, State Route 4, a part of the first hard road between Chicago and St. Louis.

Henderson's stage stand was on the spot where Ralph Rutherford now lives. "There wasn't a house in sight when I built here," said Mr. Henderson. The framework of this old Inn was incorporated into the modern home which is now located on the site.

Mr. Henderson later sold his stage stand to John Virden who operated the place until the Chicago & Alton railroad was completed from Alton to Chicago by 1854.

It is claimed that an unsuccessful effort was made to establish a town at Girard's mill even before 1834. Then in 1834 two of the settlers, Dr. Edwards and Colonel George Mather made the second effort to establish a town. They saw the business which Mr. Girard's mill had brought to the area. They saw the stage line carrying freight, and passengers from Alton, the river port, to Springfield the new state capitol. They located the new town site on the stage road which passed near the home of Mr. John Roach, now the property of E. H. Yarke.

Edwards & Mather laid out this town site and made a plat of it. They

named it Girard. The site was about the same as now occupied by the part of Girard, which lies west of the railroads and north of South street. Again the effort failed. The plat was never recorded and no houses were built there.

However the scattered settlement in the west edge of the township grew and a school house was built there in 1843, one half mile southeast of what later became Lynchburg, and Elizabeth McCullough was the teacher.

So it was that the years passed and men of courage and vision came to this part of Illinois. They purchased the land at about \$1.25 per acre. Their goal was to conquer all the wild beauty that lay before them and make it a place fit for the habitation of cultured men and their families. This was to actually be quite a struggle.

The celebrated, but eccentric Peter Cartwright, as a member of the Illinois Legislature, convened at Vandalia, voted against the forming of Macoupin County in 1829. Among other things he said that "God has set apart this region as a reservation for geese and ducks".

Even in 1834 many believed that the prairies would never be settled, and herds of deer and great flocks of wild turkeys roamed through the site that was one day to become Girard.

Chapter 2

Girard Becomes a Point on the Map.

The politicians and land promoters of the state of Illinois saw the high lights of opportunity in the building of railroads. Thus the Chicago & Alton company was organized, and construction on the railroad from Alton to Chicago became a reality.

Working from Alton the construction crews finished the line to Springfield late in 1852. Then the Girard settlers again stirred themselves to build greater things. They saw that it was no longer going to be necessary to drive to Stirrup Grove, (called Pleasant Grove by a few and later called Chapman's Point), for the mail.

Now as the busy little wood-burning engines came chuffing along, it would be no time at all until the mail would be carried to every station on the line. And a station meant a city.

In the spring of 1853 Mr. Barnabas Boggess and Charles H. Fink laid out a town site "at right angles with the world". This site covered much of the same territory as the 1834 plat. This survey was made by Mathew Savage, and lots were placed on sale from \$20.00 up. Natural wooded land extended from the west end up to where the Methodist Church now stands.

This plat carried the old name of Girard and was recorded in November of 1854. By an act of the Legislature on February 14, 1855, the town of Girard was incorporated.

Thomas Lewis and John Way made the first addition in 1855 on the south side. This section has always carried the nickname of Waytown. In 1866 Barnabas Boggess made the second addition of 60 acres north and east of the original plat.

The first house in Girard was moved in from the Liberty school west of Girard by Barnabas Boggess in May 1853. Mounted on two logs and pulled by nineteen yoke of oxen, it was slowly but surely brought to its new location on the corner just north of Foster Supply Co. This house was occupied at once by Dr. Abram Miller. In later years it was again moved to the southwest part of town where it finally burned.

By the time Dr. Miller was located in his new home enough carpenters were on hand to swing quite a building program.

Sam Boggess, brother of Barnabas, started a building on the corner across west from the Illinois Terminal Station. "Now," said his wife, Aunt Polly,

"if all the carpenters will come and build our boarding house, I'll cook for them while they build the other houses."

It is difficult to assign, at this distant date, the honors of first, second or third houses built in Girard. Records do not agree. However, by the fall of 1853, Dr. Miller had built a new home. Mr. McManners had built a residence where the Masonic Temple now stands, that residence now being the home of Mrs. Grace Alford. W. E. Eastman, grandfather of the late Attorney Frank G. Wood built on the site of Gladys Krebaum's new home. N. Blaham had built where the Shell Station now stands. A residence was built on the site where Raymond Anderson lives, and C. H. Fink had built a new home.

J. S. Warfield not only set up the first blacksmith shop in Girard in that year, but also built his home where Standard Oil is now located, and Billie Jones built the house now owned by Mac Hammond, but which was built by Mr. Jones on the corner occupied at present by Whitworth's Texaco Station. Mr. Hammonds home is perhaps the oldest, best preserved home in Girard, and in being modernized its classic lines were altered very little.

Some store buildings were also erected in 1853. Alfred Mayfield's general store; W. E. Eastman's drug and merchandise store on the north side, and the "Boomerang" where the State Bank is now located. Here the first post office in Girard was established in 1854 with James Mitchell as the first postmaster.

Although Girard had a post office, there was no station and the trains did not stop here for some time. The mail continued to be brought from Stirrup Grove by horseback for an unknown time. Then it was brought from Virden or Nilwood.

Many hindrances were constantly thrown in the path of those early enterprising citizens. It was not until the citizens themselves put forth the effort to build a side track, dig a railroad well, and fulfill several other demands, that the Chicago & Alton railway officials finally consented to make Girard a regular stop and build a station here.

The large and increasing volume of business in grain and livestock immediately justified the efforts and expenditures.

In 1854 the building continued. Barnabas Boggess built his home in that year on the site of Dr. Finney's present office. He also completed "Girard House", the first hotel in town, on the site of the present skating rink. "Girard House" was known at once as a prominent hotel and remained so for many years. It was first operated by Joseph Rafferty.

Some time later George Wood, father of the late Attorney Frank G. Wood, operated Girard House for a short time; next was Julius Hamilton, whose daughter Mrs. Mary Mayfield, is now 96 years of age and lives in Champaign, Illinois. Then William Carlin took over for a time, followed by George Yerington, father of Miss Daisy Yerington of this city. Miss Daisy was born in Girard House, which was operated by the family for many years.

The first house built where the St. Nicholas Hotel stands was a dwelling house, built about 1865 by the Andrews-Macknett-Metcalf Lumber Company, for a Dr. White from St. Louis. In 1870 this house was moved to the west part of town and became the home of Mr. Andrews. Then it was purchased by Jesse M. Metcalf and remodeled into one of the town's most elegant homes. The lawn around this home is landscaped with different varieties of unusual trees, and is treasured by the present owners, Vernor Thompson & Son who are in turn remodeling the house into a modernistic dream.

The St. Nick Hotel was then built in 1870 and James Hedges was its proprietor, for perhaps three years, then it was leased by a Mr. Sutphin. This man had 5 children, one daughter became a famous singer. Mr. and Mrs. Bert Bellamy once heard her sing as Madame Butterfly in New Orleans. Ad Timothy was the next proprietor. He sold to Edward Gough, the father of Mrs. Frank Stewart. Mr. Gough stayed from 1904-1912. A period of profitable years followed at the St. Nick under the ownership of John J. Stowe. Mrs. Stowe's cooking was famous up and down the C. and A. from Chicago to St. Louis. Many a drummer always planned to make Girard at a time to enjoy "Aunt Lizzie's" cooking. The St. Nick is now Girard's only hotel and is owned and operated by Mr. and Mrs. Don Schott.

Chapter 3

City Government and Municipal Ventures

By the charter conferred by the Legislature in 1855 there was to be elected each year a board of trustees, consisting of a president and four trustees. All other officers were to be elected by the board of trustees.

The records and elections of the city are intact for the century.

This plan of government was continued until September 14, 1880, when an election on the question of organization under a city charter resulted in an overwhelming victory for the new city plan. City officers were elected in April 1881.

The out-going board of trustees refused to receive and canvass the election returns, claiming that the returns had not been made within the time required by law. They refused to vacate their seats and continued to hold meetings and operate the business of the town.

The newly elected mayor and city council met July, 1881, and organized, held meetings and also operated the business of the city.

It was not until February 7, 1882, after the decision of the Courts that the town board held its last meeting and decided to cease playing at government. Thus, for nearly a year, Girard was ruled by two sets of officers, each trying to secure the overthrow of the other.

The first President of the Girard Town Board was James H. Wolfe, Feb. 1855. The first Mayor was Thomas Cherry in 1881. The present Mayor is George Kemp.

According to an account of Girard in the Springfield News of May 15, 1908, Girard was the first city in the state to have municipal ownership.

This municipal venture was the Girard Coal Mine, sunk in 1869, under the direction of the Town Board. A seven foot vein was struck at 350 feet down. By 1870 the mine was hoisting coal.

It was operated as a municipal mine for two years. In 1871 it was leased to a company composed of Andrew Rathgeber, Henry Stukenberg, Alexander McDonald, Angus Maxwell and James McCraner.

In 1876 the lease was transferred to William Eastham and Benjamin Leigh. In 1879 it passed into private ownership by being sold to Barnabas Boggess. After that the ownership changed hands several times.

An electric light plant was built in Girard in 1892 by G. A. Eastham and Charles Evans. They were granted license to set poles along the Girard streets and thus Girard received the most wonderful invention of the age—lighting by electricity.

In 1900 Girard again became a municipal city by taking over the electric plant from Eastham and Evans, manufacturing city electricity until 1909.

Chapter 4

"We Shall Worship God."

In accord with the most basic American tradition of all, a church was built in Girard as early as possible. A Union Church was completed in the spring of 1855, located on the present site of the Presbyterian church. Here the people worshipped until each denominational group grew strong enough numerically and financially to build their own house.

On March 1855, the Baptist congregation was formed by Rev. H. T. Chilton, Rev. James Harvey and Rev. Joseph Wrightsman, with a membership of 14. In the fall of 1856 Rev. M. V. Kitzmiller arrived from Tennessee. "I want to live in a town," he said, "where I can rear my family in a free state, where honest labor is not considered degrading." He was called to the pastorate of the Girard Baptist Church and held this position for 32 years, building up a membership of 180.

In 1865 the Baptist built the house which they used until 1902, at which

time it was remodeled. Mrs. Tom Neff and Paul Post, active members of the Baptist Church are grandchildren of Rev. Kitzmiller.

In 1854 Rev. W. C. Bell organized the Cumberland Presbyterian Church with a membership of 14. The first board of trustees was composed of T. W. McBride, W. T. Jones and John F. Roach. They organized a Sunday School in 1857. In 1864 they became the sole owners of the Union church. In 1889 the Presbyterians built a new house of worship at a cost of \$3,000.00, handsomely finished and furnished with open chairs of the newest design.

The Universalist Society was organized in January 1857 with Charles Fink, J. W. Woodruff, A. H. Cornman, A. C. Tell and Willare Magoon as Trustees. Work on the church was started at once, but was continued only as the material was paid for. When it was finally finished it was dedicated free of debt.

In 1937 the Universalist Society of Girard disorganized and the Trustees sold the building to The Church of God. This is now an active congregation in the town.

The Girard Circuit of the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in 1857 by Rev. John Everly and included Girard and Everly Chapel in North Otter. Meetings were first held in the homes of the settlers. In 1858 this circuit numbered 210 members and had 143 pupils in their Sunday Schools. Their first building stood east of the railroad. The present site was deeded to the trustees by a Mr. Jones in 1859. The present church has been remodeled in recent years, adding greatly to the beauty of the inner structure. The Wesley Education Center was erected in 1954.

Elder Alexander Johnson organized the Christian Church, (called Campbellites in the old days), in July 1860 with a membership of 13. Charter members were Mesdames Thurman, Moore, Nathan, Belle Woods, Grandma Eastham, Misses Kate and Fannie Eastham and John Ewing and wife. They met for the first services in a frame building where Coble's Variety Store now is. Jacob Deck, grandfather of Wyman and Harry Deck was the first new member baptized into this congregation. Their first building was sold to the Church of the Brethren in 1899, who moved it to another location. The present building was built in 1900.

The Roman Catholic Church, an "elegant edifice", was built during the pastorate of a Father O'Reilly. In 1890 their communicants numbered fifty families.

A Lutheran Church was built soon after the turn of the century. It stood unused for many years, but has been remodeled and now has an active congregation.

The Primitive Baptist congregation built their house in 1883.

The Church of Christ completed a small house of worship late in 1954.

The story of Girard churches is intertwined with that of the nearby country congregations.

The first country church built near Girard was northwest of town. Here the Pleasant Hill meeting house was built by the German Baptist Brethren, commonly called "Dunkers" in those days, but now legally entitled Church of the Brethren.

The large church building now owned by the Pleasant Hill Cemetery Association and used for a Community Center was built in 1867-68. It was designed by Deacon Jacob Brubaker, and built by Bill Redeye and Levi Ganger, grandfather of Harold Ganger, the present G. M. & O. agent. J. W. Harshbarger was the Elder for many years and the preaching was all done by ministers elected within the congregation.

In 1899 the congregation of the Church of the Brethren at Pleasant Hill purchased the building owned by the Christian Church in Girard, moved it to the present site and remodeled it in 1908.

In February 1873, the Boston Chapel Church was organized, with 81 charter members. David Boston and David Stead were chosen as Elders. Their first meetings were held in a schoolhouse in the timber. The first sermon was preached by J. W. Ballinger of Girard, on February 18, 1873. In September 1873, the present site was purchased and the Boston Chapel Church House was finished in 1874.

Union Chapel west of town was built in the years of 1876-1877. The church

grounds were deeded by Sam Hays, having been known as Pleasant Point Camp Ground.

Sam Hays, Joe England and Eli Hays gave timber for the framing, while William Price and Henry Adcock hewed the heavy framing. Bill Redeye was the head carpenter, Jack McCarty was the plasterer and brick mason, J. J. McPeak did all the inside finishing, making the seats and pulpit stand, and Rev. C. C. Mayhew preached the dedication sermon.

All of these country church people have contributed to the success of Girard by their loyal support of its business men through all of the century which we now celebrate.

Chapter 5

Industries Through the Century

The first warehouse was built by J. W. Woodruff in the summer of 1854, just east of the Gulf Mobile station. He bought and shipped the first car of wheat from Girard. In a few years he built a flour mill which operated with three run of burrs and had a capacity of 80 to 100 barrels of flour a day. Mr. Woodruff built the house on the south side of the square in 1868. This house has been remodeled and is still standing.

The first flour mill was built by H. Hall in 1855 and occupied a site north of the Illinois Terminal station on Mill street. The flour mill burned, and soon afterward the Girard Woolen Mill was built there and operated by B. Boggess. This woolen mill produced unusually fine blankets which were awarded the first prize at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876. Woolen goods from this mill were sold locally from The Factory Store, owned by Boggess, Hoblin and McKnight, and which was located where the Library now is. This old building was not torn down until 1951, when the new one was built.

The flour mill of Walker and Miner also had a run of three burrs, with a capacity of 150 barrels a day. This was often called the South Mill and was located south of the square at a point near the present home of Anna Wetz. This mill was first erected with a hexagon tower for a wind engine, a difficult construction job. No carpenter could be found who would dare to undertake the job, but John C. Beeby, a workman of extraordinary ability. When the tower was "raised" Mr. Beeby rode up and dropped the pins in place, every part fitting perfectly. The wind engine proved of little use however, and steam power was soon substituted.

All of these mills substantiate the evident fact that Mill Creek was at that time a very substantial stream flowing through Girard, furnishing water for these many steam engines. A large pond at the Walker & Miner Mill later became the mine pond.

In 1879 the story is recorded that Walker's water supply was giving out. Mr. Walker hired Mr. Joseph Filbrun, grandfather of Mrs. Arthur Vaniman, Mrs. Steve Weddle and Mrs. J. J. Hylton, to come and "witch" for water. Then by the evidence of his findings one deep well was dug, and seventeen bores around it, all of which were siphoned into the deep well. Mr. Walker was "pleased with the resulting abundant supply of water".

Lancaster and Erwins mill was a third one built in the same days and was located at the site of Lay's Feed and Fertilizer business. This mill had a capacity of 100 barrels a day. This story of the flour mills of Girard indicates that the wheat in this area was not shipped until it was milled.

Wm. Lancaster son of an English brick maker, came to Girard in 1857 and opened a brick yard with great ovens and fine clay bank. This was located on the property on the southwest edge of town now owned by Mrs. Ada Lancaster. It is legend that this brick kiln was first built in the 1830's. Mr. Lancaster carried on the manufacture of brick until 1898. The large brick house west of Girard owned by Mrs. Edith Lancaster and the home of Claire Harlan were, to the best of our knowledge, built of Lancaster's brick.

Amos Young developed a varied business on the site where Claire Harlan now lives on West Center street. The house on the lot west, occupied by Mr. Nation, was the Fruit Evaporation Plant. Mr. Young not only had a large apple orchard but every farmer in the area had a fine orchard. The Fruit Evaporating Company gave employment to a small army of people during the fruit season. The resulting products were of fine quality and found a ready market. Mr. Young also had a large green-house and built a large ice-house in which ice was packed in saw-dust during the "ice harvest", and sold in the following summer.

For many years numerous coopers were employed in the manufacture of flour barrels. Charles Burnett is one who is remembered as being one highly skilled in the trade, working at the Reinike Mill and Cooperage.

The activity of the Girard Coal Mine sunk in 1869 and 1870 was described by George L. Tipton in his historical issue of the Gazette, Feb. 12, 1891. We quote, "At present the company is doing an enormous business. They are now operating fourteen of the Chouteau and Innersoll mining machines, each of which operated by two men, do the work of fourteen men daily. The daily output of the mine at full capacity is 1200 ton. Two hundred men are now employed and the average payroll is around \$11 000.00 The Chicago & Alton railroad runs a "coal train" especially for this mine. The officers of the present company are C. C. Armstrong, President; Aros, K. Young, (father of Miss Ina Young), Secretary-Treasurer; and H. C. Harper. Mr. J. E. Wones is operator of the company store."

An adjoining mine at "Greenridge" a mile southwest of Girard was sunk in the 90's employing three hundred men. These miners, with their families, lived on the mine property and brought much trade into Girard.

At their peak in the early 1900's the mines employed six hundred men. In 1922 the Girard mines were closed and Girard had lost its principal industry. This was a terrific economic blow to the town.

In 1887 Herberger and Herman came to Girard and opened a cigar factory on the first floor of the "sky-scraper". Later they moved to the north side of the square. They employed about eighteen people with Steve Brennehan as one of the few yet living in Girard who learned the business. The factory sold its products up and down the Chicago and Alton line. Their H & B brand of cigars were quite popular. They also manufactured a pure Havana cigar named the "Codicil" selling for 10c. They also made "Havana Sweepers".

Mr. Herberger felt a great friendship for the miners. This was the day of unorganized labor. The miners were poorly paid as well as often being poor managers in their personal affairs. Their supplies at the company store always consumed their wages. Mr. Herberger set out barrels of tobacco clippings from which the miners were welcome to fill their pockets at any time.

In the 1880's a Lock factory was located just west of Bill Schott's Garage building, remembered by many of us as Shutt's old hay barn. The factory made plain Japan locks but in a few years it became a financial failure. The stock holders received the return on their stock in "Japan locks", a supply which it is claimed lasted Girard for the next 40 years.

Henry K. Young, a successful contractor, built a planing mill in the 80's. It was equipped with the best of machinery and operated for 30 years. His son, Russell Young, Sr., and grandson, Russell Young, Jr., are carrying on the family tradition and form a prominent Girard contracting company.

A coffin factory stood on the southeast corner of Sherman and Jefferson streets for a number of years.

The first harness and saddlery business was opened by Frederick Macknett. Mr. Edward Parks, Sr., born in Toronto, Canada, came to Girard in 1857 and in 1866 purchased the business from Macknett, continuing in this business until his death in 1895. The sons, Edward Jr., and Walter Parks carried on the business in the new brick building built in 1889 occupied now by Conlee's Cafe.

Edward Parks entered the undertaking business in 1905 with his wife, Lila Beatty Parks. Mrs. Parks died in 1909. Mr. and Mrs. Parks were Girard's first licensed embalmers and were located at the site of O. D. Luttrell's barber shop. Mrs. L. W. Deck is the daughter of Edward and Lila Parks.

There was once a basket factory on the alley north of Owen's Shoe Shop.

Here Alfred and Daniel Cottingham manufactured woven bushel baskets of split hickory which were second to none. Alfred was an exceptionally tall man and was nicknamed "Sunflower". Daniel Cottingham was the maternal grandfather of Mrs. Prudence Cherry and J. H. Church.

J. C. Hoxsey, a Girard boy and a graduate of the St. Louis Veterinarian Institute, came back to Girard and built a first class veterinarian hospital in 1904. It was located at the site of H. C. Hays Garage. This hospital contained 12 box stalls and a large carriage room. The second floor was fitted as a family apartment, and an active livery trade was carried on by Mr. Hoxsey as well as the veterinarian work. Mr. Hoxsey was a member of the St. Louis Veterinarian's Institute.

The International Vermiculite Company is Girard's only manufacturing industry at the present time. It was organized in Springfield in 1933 and was moved to Girard in 1944. The company employs local men and has a good business, often operating both day and night shifts.

Chapter 6

On the Square

Deck's Drug Store is considered the oldest continuous business in town. It was established in 1865 by Dr. Clark, father of Mrs. C. Fisher. He was joined by Lewis Deck in 1884. Lewis Deck was born in 1848, the son of Jacob Deck, a farmer near Girard. Lewis Deck became sole owner of the Drug Store. In 1917 his sons, Harry and Wyman, took over the business and now in 1955 Wyman's sons, Wyman Jr. and Robert are associated with him. This makes a four generation family of Girard business men.

Another four generation family is represented at the City Meat Market, operated by Phil and Bob Cherry, successors to their father, Clarence. Clarence was the son of Harris Cherry, born in Girard in 1854 and became a live stock dealer of wide renown. During his life more cattle, hogs, mules and sheep were shipped from Girard than in any other point in the state. Harris was the son of Thomas Calhoun Cherry, one of Girard's first livestock dealers and several times President and Councilman of the city board, Girard's first mayor, and a pioneer settler.

Bowersox is the second oldest continuous business. This firm was established by Bailey and Carr in 1867, the first exclusive clothing store. This was considered more or less a risk in a country community since "store clothes" were not yet worn by all people. The trade grew rapidly however, for Girard soon became a wealthy farm community. The store became Carr & Lowe, then Jacob Bowersox became a partner of Carr in January 1892. Jacob Bowersox left the business in 1905. Others owned the store for a few years. Then in 1910 Othel Bowersox and Bert Finney of Auburn purchased the business. After Mr. Finney's death in 1944, Othel Bowersox became sole owner.

John C. Beeby, born in Lincolnshire, England, came to Girard in 1856. He was a skilled carpenter and was always called upon to build that which no one else would attempt. He worked on the erection of the coal mine, suspending himself in dangerous positions with one hand and working with the other. After 1870 he engaged in the sawmill business, then in 1877 became proprietor of a well stocked furniture store on the west side of the square.

George L. Tipton was born in 1857. As a boy he worked as a bootblack and a newsboy. In 1867 he went to night school and became an apprentice in the printing trade for the Illinois State Register in 1870. He came to Girard in 1879, became the editor of the Girard Gazette, and married Alice Beeby. The Tipton family is a four generation family, prominent in the community.

John Bellamy came to Girard in 1852 and opened a grocery and hardware store in 1854. W. E. Eastham opened the first drug store in 1853. He was prominent serving on the town board many years. He was chairman of the committee funding Court House Bonds in 1867, and his advice was influential

in settling the scandal connected with Macoupin County's "million dollar courthouse".

Daniel Macknett came to Girard in 1854. Seeing the need of a lumber yard, he formed a lumber company with Julius Hamilton and Baker Andrews, known as Andrews, Hamilton, Macknett Lumber Co. Mr. Macknett was President of Girard Town Board during the years of its first municipal venture, the coal mine. He remained in business here until 1893 when he moved to Carlinville where he owned a lumber yard. Mr. Macknett was the maternal grandfather of Miss Georgia Donaldson. The present Garrettson lumber yard is at the location of the first lumber yard. As far as known Mr. Garrettson's office is the oldest building on the square and his "stand up" desk one of the oldest pieces of office furniture in Girard.

James Metcalf came to Girard in 1856. He opened a drug store of which he was proprietor until he became President of the Bank of Girard in 1875. He was on the first town board and was a Director on the first school board. He was the father of Jesse, Charles and Hal Metcalf, all prominent in the community and identified with the Bank of Girard as the years went by.

C. C. Armstrong came to Girard in 1855 and was in the mercantile business for many years. He built the house in which Mrs. Carrie Lynch and her daughter now reside.

Wm. S. Littlepage came to Girard in 1858. He was a bricklayer and plasterer by trade. He was prominent in city affairs, serving 4 years as President.

Daniel Delaney, an Irishman, came to Girard in 1858. He sold nursery stock for many years.

F. W. Ring was born on the Rhine. He was a well educated and accomplished musician, coming to the U. S. in 1855. He traveled widely and played for a time in the St. Louis orchestra. After serving in the Civil War he came to Girard in 1867 and opened a bakery and restaurant here. He organized and trained a band in Girard which became the best in all central Illinois and was in great demand in all the surrounding cities for many years.

Girard once had a skyscraper of 3 stories. In 1867 under a tripartite agreement the building now occupied by City Meat Market was built. The Masons owned the third story, and used it continuously until they erected their present splendid temple in 1925. The second story is the City Hall, now 87 years old. The first floor was remodeled a few years ago and the third story, having become dangerous, was removed.

The earliest photographer recorded was G. W. Jorns in 1867, followed by W. H. Farley, Chester Ohmart and Jess Campbell.

Perhaps the earliest jeweler was E. W. Ruckel in 1867.

Mr. F. W. Haster opened a store in 1870, dealing in books, music, musical instruments, confectionery and tobacco. He built the home now owned by Amelia Everhart. This store passed into the hands of George Rathgeber around 1900 and only changed ownership a few years ago. Roy Tranbarger is now proprietor of this store.

Fred Storz came from Germany in 1851 and opened a bakery and restaurant in 1874. He was the father of Mrs. Mabel Metcalf and Albert Storz.

Henry C. Hamilton, father of Roscoe Hamilton, who is now President of the State Bank of Girard, came to Girard in 1865. He was fourteen years old and had quit school at the age of twelve to help support the family. In 1867 his skill as a clerk had already been proved and he became bookkeeper in the Andrew's Bank. When the present bank was organized in December 1874, Henry was assistant cashier. He became president in 1887 and held that position until his death.

G. A. Donaldson came to Girard in 1880 with \$50.00 of borrowed money in his pocket. He was 20 years old and opened a watch repair service and jewelry store in one corner of C. C. Armstrong's drug store. Then he purchased the building which stood on the Library site. He was in business there for 30 years. He then moved to the building now occupied by Coble's and remained there until 1940 when he retired. He was in business in Girard 60 years.

Dodson's Opera House was built by T. C. Dodson in 1893 at a cost of \$15,000. It was considered quite a cultural accomplishment for Girard. Home talent productions were given here until about 1918. Road shows, vaudeville

companies and musical operatic troupes were regular performers. The first movies were held there. Girard people always responded in large crowds to these performances. The building is now owned by Everett Collins and is the location of his home apartment.

The first milk route into Girard was owned by Henry Stutsman, father of H. V. Stutsman. This was in the 1870's. His creamery was located 4 miles east of Girard. Bart Hopson operated a milk route in Girard for over 40 years. He also manufactured ice cream for a number of years at a location east of the railroad.

Edgar Davidson came to Girard from his farm in 1894 and was in business for 56 years as a mechanic.

G. G. Garretson came to Girard as a business man in 1883. He became interested in the lumber business in 1898 and after these 72 continuous years, still goes to the office every day.

J. O. Burton was a prominent clothing and dry goods merchant for over 50 years.

The Dohm brothers came in the 70's. They were dealers in coal, ice, poultry and livestock. They shipped many carloads of pigeons, rabbits, etc., to New York City. Mr. George Dohm, father of Mrs. Henry Brown and Mrs. Amelia Everhart, often went with the shipment.

John Ruyle came to Girard in the 70's. He ran a boarding house for the miners many years. He was the grandfather of Mrs. Ethel Miller.

The Routzans and Coverdills were prominent livestock, grain and hay buyers for many years.

The reader will think of many other familiar names as "belonging" to Girard—Ball, Boston, Fletcher, Stewart, Lynch, England, Hays, Woolley, Coe, Thacker, Brubaker, Stead, Miller, Tietzort, Gibson, and others. These, and no doubt others, came early, and settled on the land adjoining Girard.

Chapter 7

Bankers and Lawyers

It was in 1859 that Columbus C. Armstrong moved to Girard and entered the mercantile business. He was the only man in town with an iron safe, a contraption that could have been opened in fifteen minutes with an ordinary jimmy in the hands of a burglar. Mr. Armstrong kept thousands of dollars in this safe, and was the paymaster for the mills and grain dealers. He never lost a dollar for any one.

A Wm. Hindle is said to have opened the first bank.

A bank was opened in 1867 by B. P. Andrews, who sold it to the firm of George Ball, J. D. Metcalf and John Roach.

On December 10, 1874, the Bank of Girard was established with J. D. Metcalf, president; B. P. Andrews, cashier. One year later, Mr. Andrews sold out and Henry Hamilton, father of Roscoe Hamilton became cashier. This bank later became the State Bank of Girard, and has conducted a safe constructive business up to the present day.

During the 1907 money panic the C. & A. railroad stopped all trains in Girard and the employees of the entire line went to the State Bank where their checks would be honored.

The People's Bank was organized February 1, 1893, with J. N. McElvain, president. In 1897 S. O. Smith became president and the late Harry Tietzort was cashier for many years. This organization carried on a constructive, friendly banking service until the economic crash of 1930.

Among Girard's Attorneys-at Law have been Wm. Eastham, George Eastham, George Bowersox, Edward Knotts, Frank G. Wood, C. C. Terry and at present S. O. Smith, Jr.

Chapter 8

Newspaper Enterprises

As early as the 7th of November, 1857, when the town was yet in its infancy and contained less than 300 inhabitants, we find Dr. A. R. Cribfield embarking in a journalistic enterprise here. The name of his paper was the Girard Enterprise.

The paper was neutral in politics and in about one year was sold to W. A. Solomon, who changed the name to the Girard Guide. He, after about one year's similar experience to Cribfield, sold the paper to Mr. McChesney who again changed the name to the Girard News. A man by the name of Caufield became associated with him in business and continued the publication for about one year, when it suspended entirely.

In 1865 Messrs McChesney & Milton commenced the publication of the Girard Enterprise. The first issue was in April of the above year, and in October of that year Mr. McChesney retired from the firm. The business was then conducted by Mr. Milton for six months when the citizens purchased the outfit and put the office in charge of H. H. Keebler, with Wm. Snook as local editor.

After a lapse of eight months Thomas Organ became manager for the citizen owners and made the paper Republican in politics. There was some objection to this which finally resulted in the office being sold. In 1872 Wm. E. Milton moved an office here from Greenfield and commenced the publication of the Review, at the same time he printed a paper for Nilwood called the Nilwood Review. In 1874 Mr. Milton leased the office to Chas. E. Fish, who changed the name of the paper to the Democratic Chief, which publication suspended after four months.

Crenshaw & Powers afterwards got control of the office and the publication was revived. Powers afterwards changed the name back to Review. The paper was continued under different managements and was of different political complexions until 1878 when the outfit was sold at auction and was moved away from Girard.

The first issue of the Girard Gazette was on January 18, 1879, with Messrs. Tipton and Stuve as proprietors. It was a six column folio and was neutral in politics.

Mr. Stuve, the son of a rich man, soon served notice on Tipton that he must either buy of, or sell to, Stuve. Mr. Stuve believed that Tipton could not raise the money. But going to the bank, George Tipton stated his case to J. D. Metcalf and asked for a loan. A friend stepped up and offered security. Thus the Girard Gazette became the property of George Tipton, who took over the sole ownership on February 26, 1880. The office became one of the best equipped country printing offices in central Illinois.

In December 1904, Mr. Tipton presented the office to his son Fred L. Tipton, who edited the Gazette until his death.

In 1925 Norris Goode purchased the paper and in 1948 made it the property of the present owners, Annabel Goode, Bertha and Louis Hoeflin, Dorothy and Charles Jones.

Chapter 9

Military Record

Girard men fought for the Union in the Civil War and were at the storming of Fort Donaldson and at the siege of Vicksburg. Some of them marched with Sherman to the sea and stood with General Grant at Appomattox.

Col. S. McKnight had moved to Girard in 1859. In August, 1862, he enlisted as a private in Company H, 122 regiment of Illinois infantry. When the war was over he had been promoted many times, and was on the staff of General Garrard at the close of the war. He returned to Girard and became a dry goods merchant. He married Virginia Boggess, daughter of

the town father, B. Boggess. The granddaughter, Dorothy McKnight, lives at Canton, Illinois

William Eastham enlisted under the 10th regiment bill and in May, 1861, raised a company with his private means. It became a part of the 14th Regiment of Illinois Volunteers and was commanded by Col. John Palmer, later the governor of the state

Luke Mayfield, brother of Alfred Mayfield, was killed in the Civil War, and the G. A. R. Post at Girard was named for him.

World War I

The only Girard man killed in World War I was David Hart, and thus the local post of the American Legion was named for him.

A great Soldier's and Sailor's Homecoming after World War I was held on August 7 in Girard. Henry Hamilton, S. O. Smith, Atty. Frank G. Wood and Mayor E. A. Coe were the reception committee.

Every man from Macoupin County who wore a uniform during the war was invited to a chicken supper on that day. For the day's entertainment there were athletic and pie eating contests. There was speaking by Major B. M. Chipfield of Canton and Lt. Howard C. Knotts, one of the six American aces of World War I, a boy born in Girard.

There was a grand parade almost a mile long, in which the schools, the business men and organizations showed floats, and prizes were offered to the amount of \$125.00.

The Girard and Virden Bands, the Carlinville and Gillespie Bands, the Illinois Watch Factory Band from Springfield and the United States Military Band from Jefferson Barracks were in the days performances.

The first airplane to land at Girard came in, making a very bad landing in Warrick's pasture north of town. The facilities for landing were unsatisfactory to the pilot, and he did not perform the stunts advertised.

The program closed at night with a \$1,000 display of fireworks. There were about 2,000 people milling around to see the display, and the expert from St. Louis demanded that the people stay back from the danger zone. The police force could not press them back. Then the expert short-timed an aerial bomb. It exploded just over their heads. No one was hurt, but they scattered to a safer area and the exhibition proceeded successfully.

The merchants underwrote this Homecoming, the cost being \$1,500.

World War II

World War II struck Girard with a tragic number of losses and eighteen of our boys became Gold Stars. A memorial shelf containing a book dedicated to each one lost in both World War I and II was established at the Girard Township Library by the Auxiliary of the American Legion.

Chapter 10

The Unveiling of "Soldier's Monument".

Perhaps the largest procession ever to assemble in Girard was on Decoration Day, May 30, 1896. It was then that the unveiling and the dedication of the "Soldier's Monument" in the Girard Cemetery took place.

The square was decorated with bunting of the national colors and flags floated over every business house.

A grand procession, formed under the supervision of town marshal Thomas

Mayfield Post of the Grand Army of the Republic then led the procession of nine marching organizations followed by many citizens in carriages. The procession reached from the square to the cemetery.

Twenty-five hundred people were in attendance and a large grand stand had been erected for the accommodation of the speaker and the invited guests. The band was seated in their new band wagon. Henry C. Hamilton was chairman of the occasion, and introduced Col. S. McKnight, who delivered the Decoration Day Oration. Then Mr. Hamilton presented the monument to Luke Mayfield Post, G. A. R., in the following words:

"Commander of Luke Mayfield Post: We have not erected this monument to the dead here alone—to him mustered out amidst the shock of battle, along the weary march, or amidst the miasma of the southern swamps; but to those as well who have been left on guard these thirty years, that their blood trophies be not committed to the inexperienced youth of the sixties. But to the matured manhood of the nineties. We build not a monument alone, where sacred ashes may be revered, but a pavillion 'neath which the soldier still lingering midst the scenes of his triumphs may gather and have his heart, now chilling with the breath of years, warmed by the manifested love of an appreciative posterity. We erect this statuary to renew the fires of patriotism apt to burn dimly in time of peace or be transferred to other forges. I fear the soldier of the Republic will pass away ere the sentiment of the nation will crystallize into words conveying to him an idea of the love that is borne him; ere his statue is placed in its niche in the temple of fame. But his name is written on the highest scroll of honor; and what a glorious record there is treasured up in the history of the great nation for the patriotic Illinois soldiers who brought home with them three hundred battle flags, and I am proud today to know that Macoupin county furnished her share of the true and the brave, in the great struggle for national union to which Girard contributed largely; and now to the commander of Luke Mayfield Post No. 516 Department of Illinois Grand Army of the Republic, I am authorized to invite you at this time to accept from the citizens of Girard and vicinity at the hands of its accredited representatives this memorial, and request that it be dedicated by you to the purpose for which it has been designed and erected. And reverently standing within this sacred precinct, in hearing of their living comrades, we pledge to honor their memories, to teach their virtues to our children, and by consecrating our lives to the service of the heritage they secured to us to accelerate her speed and to intensify her virtue till Columbia far in the van of sublunar progress becomes the paragon of nations and the ally of Heaven."

S. S. Garst, Commander, responded to Mr. Hamilton as follows:

"Mr. Chairman: In the name of my comrades of the Grand Army of the Republic, representing as they do all soldiers and sailors who defended the integrity and authority of the Nation, I thank you and those whom you represent for this memorial shaft. Its very silence is impressive; without articulate speech it is eloquent—it needs no words, it is in itself an oration. It assures us that our dead are held in remembrance—those dead who gave their lives for the security of the children and the union of the states.

"It is significant of brave and loyal obedience to the command of the nation always and everywhere. Since the obligations of citizenship are not restricted to time or place or to the conflict of arms, it gives encouragement for the future. Since the recognition and approval it gives of patriotic fidelity and heroism will be an incentive for the display of public valor and virtue in all coming time. There can be no doubt that the honor you pay to the patriot dead and to their memorable deeds, will serve not only to make American citizenship in these days more reputable, but also to maintain and perpetuate through all future generations, the union and authority of the United States of America. Mr. Chairman, in the name of my comrades, I thank you and those you represent for your courtesy in permitting us, who are bound by special ties to them, to honor our dead."

After an address by a visiting speaker and a prayer, Commander Garst

"Attention, Luke Mayfield Post, No. 516, Dept. of Illinois, G. A. R.. In the name of the Grand Army of the Republic, I now dedicate this memorial shaft. I dedicate it to the memory of those who in the navy guarded our inland seas and ocean coasts and fell in defense of the flag. I dedicate it to the memory of those who in the army fought for our hillsides and valleys and plains and fell in defense of the flag. I dedicate it to the memory of those who on land and on sea fought for the union and fell in defense of the flag." He paused until the playing of "The Star Spangled Banner" had been concluded. Then he gave the order, "Let the monument be unveiled."

Miss Gertie Weed, daughter of a comrade, stepped forward and loosened the large flag which veiled the shaft. She recited a poem which concluded:

"I unveil this memorial in honor of our heroic dead . . . Who are sleeping to waken in this weary world no more; . . . Sleeping for their true loved country; . . . Sleeping for the flag they bore."

The oldest man in the procession was John Sparks of Child's Post of Palmyra, 92 years of age, a veteran of the Blackhawk, Mexican and Civil Wars.

Chapter 11

Fire and Disasters

The first great fire was in the summer of 1861, and broke out in the store of James Burton on the north side of the square. The entire west half of the block was destroyed.

The next fire was a planing mill and two warehouses that stood near the railroad. Soon came the fires that destroyed the two mills and in 1879 the school house burned. The mill of W. W. Bristow and the Chicago & Alton depot burned in 1884. In August of 1884 the southwest corner of the square burned, and two weeks later a portion of the north side went up in smoke.

In '85 the South Mill burned at a loss of \$40,000. In 1887 the business portion west of the northwest corner of the square burned, and the southeast corner was in ruins by the fall of 1888.

The many wooden buildings were proving to be fire traps, and as they burned the reconstruction was usually of brick. On March 5, 1909, the last of two old-fashioned buildings on the north side burned. L. J. Foster's new soda fountain was thrown into the street to save it. It was ruined by the saving and no insurance collectable. At the same fire the cigar factory supplies were saved including many 400 lb. cases of tobacco and the "wooden Indian".

In October, 1909, was the \$35,000 west side fire which took the business places of ten men, from two to five A. M. Dr Mitchell, Dr. Riffey, Dr. Simmons and Dr. VanWormer the dentist, lost all their medical stock and equipment. The fire was thought to have been started by a burglar since the safe in Dr. Riffey's drug store had been rifled.

In 1910 a \$12,000 fire took the northeast corner of the square, and at last the old "Girard House" was gone. Shutt's Elevator burned in February, 1950, attracting hundreds of people from many miles away. A new elevator, modern in every way, was immediately built on the same site.

There were two mine disasters. The first was in 1879. A fire started in the shaft while all men were below. Word went out to bring salt to dump down into the shaft. It took all the salt in town to put out the fire. No one lost their life.

The second was on Saturday, December 2, 1922. Eighteen men were seriously injured, one dying two days later, when gas escaping from an unused

part of the mine exploded. The men were riding through the tunnels to the bottom of the shaft when the explosion occurred, the miners lamps igniting the gas as they reached the pocket where it was gathering. The men in the first car had no warning and were terribly burned. The men in the second car had time to cover their faces.

The men walked from the blast, which was in the vicinity of "The Home", northwest of the shaft, each one helping some one else more seriously injured. It was thirty minutes before they reached the shaft. The men were brought to the surface where medical aid was waiting and a crowd had already gathered. When the count was taken, Ed Seaton was missing, but a searching party found him, after he had walked three miles in the wrong direction. The anxious, waiting crowd, including the relatives, demonstrated a great relief as the good word came.

Howard Ronk died on Monday. The injured were: Otto Gher, Charles Rucker, Albert Ronk, Hiram Rennie, Edward Seaton, John Riggs, John Finnerty, Emanuel Garbett, Frank Peppard, Ernest Peppard, Dan Clay, Frank Wheeler, Dan Rennie, John Rennie, John Kolski and Jess McDaniel's.

The first fire department in Girard was organized May 3, 1902. The department owned a "fine hand engine" at that time.

Chapter 12

Physicians and Dentists in Girard

Dr. Abram Miller was the first physician mentioned in Girard, and there was also a Dr. White in the early days.

Dr. R. J. Mitchell came to Girard in 1871 from Rush Medical College in Chicago where he had graduated that spring with high honors. He was the son of an officer in the British army who never returned to England after the revolution. He was a prominent physician and a specialist in the eye and ear. He helped organize the Macoupin County Medical Society and practised here until his death.

Dr. Adam Simmons came to Girard in 1865. He had taught science in the University of Ohio for a time, then had turned to the study of medicine, graduating from the Eclectic Medical Institute of Cincinnati.

His son, Dr. Albert Simmons, graduated from the American Medical College in St. Louis, became associated with his father in 1882, and carried on the Simmons medical tradition for many years.

Dr. R. S. Cowan came to Girard in 1869. His paternal grandfather had fought under General Washington and made the famous crossing of the Delaware. Dr. Cowan graduated at Pope College, St. Louis, and served in the Civil War as Surgeon of the 3rd Missouri Cavalry under General Price of the Confederate Army.

Since the turn of the century, Girard has been served by the able physicians, Dr. G. E. Hill, Dr. J. H. Riffey and Dr. E. E. Bullard, all deceased.

At present Dr. Howard A. Finney, a native son, has enhanced the town with a beautiful, modern office with scientific equipment. He is a graduate of University of Illinois; interned at St. Louis City Hospital; is a member of the American Medical Association, and a Past President of the Macoupin County Medical Society. Dr. Finney is devoting his excellent professional service to his home community.

Dr. J. R. Sharp, a Pennsylvanian by birth, established a wide practice in Girard several years ago and maintains a splendid new office with scientific equipment. He is a graduate of Duke University, B. S.; Chicago University, M. B. and M. D.; he enlisted in the U. S. Medical Corps in 1942 and was stationed at Halloran General Hospital, Staten Island, N. Y. until 1946. He is a member of International College Surgeons; Association of Military Sur-

geons; American Fracture Association; Mississippi Valley Medical Association; Past President of the Macoupin County Medical Society and is a staff member of the St. John's Hospital and Memorial Hospital in Springfield.

Dentists who have served Girard include Dr. Frank Sage, Dr. A. H. Barnes, Dr. W. W. VanWormer, Dr. A. C. Davis, Dr. E. E. Smith, Dr. Frank Stewart, Dr. Albright, Dr. Claude Brown, and Dr. T. R. McKemie.

Chapter 13

Girard's School System.

(compiled by Georgia Donaldson)

Wherever the free people of America settled the land, one of their first concerns was education. Their children must learn readin' writin' and 'rithmetic. In Girard the first school session was held in 1853 and taught by Miss Harriet Purdy at the present dwelling house at 238 W. Center. The expense of this school was met by the parents of the pupils. In 1854 a school was taught by John Bellamy, father of Bert Bellamy in a house south of the Presbyterian church.

On November 7, 1855, at a meeting of the City Council, a committee was appointed to "procure a school teacher, stove and fuel." By December 3, a building owned by Barnabus Boggess had been purchased for \$460.00. Sixty dollars cash and the balance to be paid by April 1856. On December 10 a teacher was employed named S. C. Ryan to be paid \$35.00 per month for an indefinite time. A stove had been purchased for \$14.75.

A diary has been found stating that the first school instituted by the council was the low one room house, standing just south of the Presbyterian church.

By February 8, 1856, a committee was appointed by the City Council to consider the expediency of annexing the balance of the school district to the Incorporation of Girard. This committee was to confer with one or more persons in Carlinville concerning how this could be done. On April 26, 1856 it was voted to levy \$1 per \$100 of taxable property for the purpose of meeting school expenses.

Evidently the "indefinite time" for which Mr. Ryan had been employed was short, for by May 10 a Miss Pachen had been interviewed to take his place at \$30 a month, providing she could prove she had the qualifications necessary to hold the position. Then a Mr. Welch appeared on the scene and said he would teach for \$2.50 to \$3 per pupil per quarter, according to the number of pupils. He could begin teaching July 1. He did teach through July and evidently gave satisfaction, for he was employed at the salary he wished with Miss Pachen as his assistant. If he needed other assistants, he was to pay for them himself. Mr. Welch felt he must have a blackboard and platform, so a committee was appointed to build them. He also presented to the City Council a code of rules and regulations whereby he would govern the school. The Council ordered a copy of these rules be preserved, but they could not be found.

In the meantime the school building was being enlarged and a new room added and lathed and plastered. The old part of the building had to have new sleepers. The building was completed by October 1856. By this time Mr. Welch decided he and his assistant should be paid a straight \$225 a quarter. Evidently this was too much money, for two other teachers were interviewed. They agreed to teach for \$3 per pupil. If the amount was too great to be met by public funds, the parents of the pupils were to make up the deficit. Mr. Gates and Mr. Dodds, the new teachers, were to do their own collecting. There were a number of new textbooks to be considered and meetings were

held about them, but no record was kept as to the ones selected.

On April 16, 1857 a new ordinance was ordained by the president and trustees of the town of Girard that said Board of Trustees "shall have jurisdiction of common school within said town and have power to assess and collect taxes for erection of school houses and furnishing of same, the employment of teachers and the payment of same and all other needful management to carry out the provisions of the general school law not contrary to the laws of the State of Illinois". This is the last time that schools are mentioned in the minutes of the meetings of the City Council.

In the Girard Enterprise for August 29, 1858 a call was published for sealed bids on specifications given in detail for a new wooden school house in District 3. These bids were to be given to the board, J. M. Ewing, J. J. Sears and J. D. Metcalf.

On December 31, 1870 the wooden school house burned. A new building was started but during the interim school had to continue, so classes were held in various homes in the community. One of them, a Miss Marsh, is still remembered with great affection by a pupil of hers. Miss Marsh was fond of small children. There was a rule then, and still in existence, that no child under six could attend school. Miss Marsh would come to the home of this little girl each morning and get her with the other children of the family and take her to school. When a visitor or school director would come to visit, this four-year-old would hide behind Miss Marsh's hoop skirt. She remained concealed this way that whole winter.

No records can be found of the cost of the new building. It was erected where the present West Side school is. It was of red brick and had four downstairs rooms and four upstairs, with high ceilings and long, dark stairs that led to the upper floors. There were no artificial lights and they were not allowed in the building until as late as 1912. Shutters were at all the windows and during the 70's these were nailed shut to keep the boys from breaking the window panes when playing ball. As soon as the mines began operating in the early 70's the old wood stoves were done away with and no more bills were presented for cords of wood. Some old textbooks have been found that were used in rural schools and show that dictionaries printed in 1844 were still being used in 1872. French's arithmetic and McGuffey's readers were standard books. The printing was always very small and much information was condensed between the covers. About 1890 a furnace was placed in the building with valves on each radiator that had to be opened so the steam could escape amid hissing and groaning from the pipes. The furnace was installed evidently when an annex of four rooms, two upstairs and two downstairs, was added to the north side of the building at a cost of \$3450. On motion the tax levy that year was \$4000. This gave twelve rooms and it was felt that never again would there be need to build.

In the 70's and early 80's there was no grading system. Pupils came to school, often bringing the textbooks they happened to have at home from which to study. They remained as long as they wanted to, many of them going through their texts in the upper grades several times. The boys usually stayed until they got a job and the girls marking time until they found something more interesting to do. Blackburn College was in existence and several were able to go from the Girard school without taking entrance examinations.

The Board of Education was proud of the school building and decided that "any pupil marking, cutting or defacing the building in any way should be suspended from school as well as for insubordination or misconduct, said student to remain suspended until Board took action".

Mr. E. L. Howett came as principal about 1887 and at once began instituting a graded school. His salary was \$100 a month, his assistant receiving \$50, and the other teachers were paid from \$40 to \$45. He introduced some new and uniform textbooks, among them the Pathfinder series of Physiology, Gray's book on Botany, and Barnes' Primary History, Steele's Zoology and Loomises' Geometry.

By 1890 Mr. Howett had so organized the classes that he felt graduating exercises could be held for those who had completed a certain amount of work. There was a class numbering twenty-seven and a class picture was taken, the boys and girls standing in stiff rows, all looking grave and determined as if they knew life would be grim and earnest. There did not seem to be any effort made to make this a gala occasion. There were no commencement exercises and in the picture there were no extra furbelows to their clothes.

By 1892 there was a two year high school, and Mr. Howett was told by the Board of Education as early as February to go ahead and find a suitable room in which to hold graduation exercises. Mr. Howett reported he was able to secure the city hall. The president of the Board instructed a committee to see about getting diplomas for the graduates and to see that the hall was in good order for the commencement exercises. That first commencement was a gala affair. The girls wore heavy white wool dresses, their hair was done in psyche knots, and both girls and boys felt the seriousness of the occasion. Two little girls sat on the stage, and after each member of the class had completed giving his or her oration, would receive the bouquets friends in the audience would give the ushers to hand to the little girls to pass on to the graduates. There was an admission fee charged to attend the exercises, and Mr. Howett was happy to announce to the Board later that \$3.44 had been cleared after all expenses had been paid.

In the fall of 1892 Harper's Readers and Maxwell Grammars had been introduced into the system and a tax levee of \$5000 was made. The school census enumerator reported that there were 552 children of school age, and 213 of pre-school age. The enumerator had been paid \$5 for his services.

In May 1893 a meeting was held by the directors to decide what to do about a janitor who talked too much. It was finally decided to "inform him to keep his mouth shut about teachers and school affairs". It was also ordered that he must see the school grounds were cleared of cows and the grass cut ten days before school started in the fall.

In September, 1893 a two-year Latin course was instituted. R. G. Moore of Carlinville was the assistant superintendent at a salary of \$35. (He stayed but one year.)

Disciplinary problems were handled by the Board of Education. The Junior class was misbehaving. There was a call meeting of the Board and it was decided to move the class into Mr. Howett's room, to see "if conditions could not be improved as the Junior class was clear out of control."

Mr. Howett's salary was \$112.50 by 1894, but he was offered a better position, so left. The new principal received \$35 a month. The other teachers were receiving the same \$40-45 salary. There was much complaint at the Board meetings because the tuition pupils were not paying their fees. The tuition pupils were those who did not live in the boundaries of the town.

In 1897 there was a three-year high school and there were six members in the graduating class. The commencement exercises were still the big social event of the year. All other audiences were judged by it—whether it was as large, or as well-dressed as the commencement audience. And they still paid twenty-five cents admission.

In 1901 an Inter-scholastic meet was held in Girard with Carlinville, Virden, Waverly and Girard participating. The events took place in the school yard and the races were run on Center street. F. E. Kennedy, then superintendent of schools, was the instigator of these meets which later became the Macoupin County Oratorical and Athletic Meets, and later the Macoupin Oratorical and Athletic Association, thus giving this county its claim of being the oldest such association in the state. Mr. Kennedy reported that Girard's part of the first Meet was \$39.32. This was added to the library fund.

In January 1904 a ladder long enough to reach to the second story was placed in the lower hall with orders it was never to be used except in case of fire. This was in compliance with the state fire laws. Permission was also given the principal to buy a bucket for each room and a dipper so the pupils could get drinks without having to go outside to the well every time they

were thirsty. He hoped in this way to do away with so much loitering in the halls. (It didn't work.)

There was a four-year high school by 1904, and that year's graduates were members of the pioneer class of the present day type of school with the eight grades and a four-year high school.

The Members of the Board of Education received a big surprise at a meeting in April 1905. The teachers appeared in a body bringing ice cream and cake as a token of appreciation for the cooperation received from the Board that year. Evidently the members were quite overcome by this attention, for they at once made a motion to record this visit in the minutes and their thanks.

By the fall of 1905 music was added to the curriculum with a special teacher and a new piano. For this pupils and high school teachers sent the Board of Education resolutions of respect and thanks for "opening to us the highway leading to a musical education by introducing music into the schools, and providing us gratis a new piano, this showing the earnest desire of the members to make the Girard school a peer among high schools in Illinois, and furthermore that the pupils are earnestly endeavoring by our sincere efforts toward good work and discipline to be worthy of the many kindnesses and favors so generously bestowed".

The graduating class of 1906 was given permission to have a class play the week before commencement, the forerunner of all succeeding class plays.

In the fall of 1906 coal was contracted for at ten cents a bushel.

The first negotiations for the East Side school were begun in December, 1906. A committee was appointed to negotiate as to a suitable place for it to be erected, and it was completed and first used in 1907.

By 1912 there was a movement to vote for a Township High School. The vote carried and it began functioning in the fall of 1914. There were several joint meetings between the grade school board and the high school board regarding rent, and the obligations each was to assume. In spite of the complete change in the school system that had been feared by the tax-payers, school affairs went on in much the same manner. The two Boards of Education entered into a contract to pay the grade B. of E. \$50 per month rent for the use of the building and the grade school to pay the high school \$25 a month for the services of the superintendent. The grade school turned over to the high school the old district No. 8, it thus becoming part of District 182.

The rooms were crowded with pupils by 1916 and it was voted to use a building known as the Waytown store building for pupils living in the south of town. The building and Grounds committee were instructed to get suitable furnishings for it. This school continued only as long as the Girard mine was in operation.

By 1917 it was realized changes must be made in the school building in order to comply with state school laws, so bids were asked on plans that had been drawn for remodeling the West Side school. The bids received were not satisfactory and because the cost of materials was so high the county superintendent of schools gave the Board of Education permission to continue to use the building as it was. Rent to the high school was increased to \$100 a month and the grade school paid \$35 towards the superintendent's salary.

By 1918 it was decided it would be better to have a superintendent for the high school and another for the grades.

A forward-looking group of citizens decided it was time for a new high school building, so it petitioned the high school Board of Education to hold an election for the purpose of voting whether or not to erect a new building, to select a site and whether or not to purchase a site.

The election was held on April 8, 1918. Much work was done to arouse interest in the proposition and when the votes were counted it was found 514 voted yes, and 130 against it.

Next came the choosing of a site. By June 1918 the present site was selected and purchased from Mr. R. E. Alford. A vote of thanks was given Mr. Alford by the Board of Education for the very fair price he asked for his property and his interest in the progress of education in

this community. The new building was completed by November 1919. The classes were held in the Presbyterian church and city hall during the months before the building was finished. The new commercial department was added that year, and there were eight members on the faculty.

In March, 1920 notice was given the teachers that a deduction of \$1 a month be made from each one's salary during the first five months of each year, this to comply with the State Pension Law.

In 1923 it was voted to have a new West Side building which would include a room large enough to be used as a gymnasium and auditorium. This was a new departure as the high school had no such room. There all entertainments and basket ball games took place in the study hall. Each night at four o'clock the janitor and his helpers moved all the chairs, sometimes as many as 250 from the study hall into the halls and class rooms so the boys could practice basket ball. It was found when a play was given the audience unfortunate enough to have seats on the sides were never quite sure as to what was happening on the stage. Often there was better entertainment between acts during a class play, as the curtains strung on a wire across the front of the stage were of a very thin green burlap, and it was easy to see the scenes being shifted. All heavy furniture had to be removed through the opening in the front curtains and carried into the halls. Finally an extension was built across the front of the stage and the audience literally sat at the feet of the performers. The green curtains had to be rehung from a new wire and have a new width of burlap added. Those curtains lasted until 1934, when one of the classes presented the school with handsome brown velvet ones.

The brown curtains however, only had a short life., for in 1936 it was voted to build a new gymnasium with an auditorium, a separate building that would also house the home economics department and a new department that was added, called building and trades.

On August 7, 1947 the township voted for a consolidated school and Unit District No. 3 was organized. This included all the country and town schools as well as the Nilwood schools. By July of the next year, this new system was functioning.

Girard has had a school system for a hundred years, and looking over old records one is impressed by the fact it has been controlled by public minded citizens who have been willing to give their time and efforts to shape its policies, and make it comparable with schools of towns of like size and population. Its affairs have been conducted in a business-like manner, and it has always been a going and a growing concern. Through the years its teachers have made honest efforts to keep their work on a high level. With but one or two short periods it has always been on the list of schools accredited by the University of Illinois. The result has been that over 2000 graduates have been able to meet life with the assurance that they have received an education that will serve as a foundation for their future work.

The first school annual was published in 1907. Twelve members of this class are still living.

Chapter 14

Institutions

THE HOME is an institution of which Girard is justly proud. Located at the northwest corner of town, it was built in 1906, and is owned and maintained under the management of The Church of the Brethren, Southern District of Illinois. Cullen C. Gibson who settled on the north edge of Girard in 1864 was a leader in the building project.

Dan Vaniman, father of Herbert, Roy and Frank Vaniman who own the home farm one half mile north of Girard, solicited all of the funds. In addition to being a guest home for elderly people, it was the county orphanage from 1910 to 1920. Thirty to forty children were cared for in the north wing of the building. The Home is now filled to capacity with elderly guests and has been modernized in every way. The present House Managers are Mr. and Mrs. Velmer Molen.

The Girard Township Library

During the depression of the 1930's a W. P. A. Library was opened at Girard, books being supplied by donations and the Extension Service of the Illinois State Library. When the project was closed about 1940 The Girard Woman's club assumed the opportunity and responsibility of operating the Library. With Mrs. Wesley Wertz as President of the Club, it maintained a clubroom up town where the library was housed, Mrs. Henry Edwards donating her time to open the Library once or twice a week. In 1945 Mrs. J. N. McElvain as President of the club and Mrs. L. T. Weddle as Chairman of the Library Board, secured the help of the Extension Chief of the State Library to hold an election to establish a Township Library. The election was held in April 1946 with Mrs. J. N. McElvain as President of the Woman's club taking an active interest. The proposition carried with a large majority of a large vote. The first board of trustees was Miss Georgia Donaldson, Mrs. Wesley Wertz, Mrs. L. T. Weddle, Marshall Shutt, Russell Young, Sr., and Philip Cherry. Opening as a tax supported institution in April, 1947, the board of trustees hired Mrs. L. T. Weddle as librarian, who, resigning from the board, was replaced by Mrs. Carl Reischauer. The Boy Scouts moved the thousand volumes to the present location in the fall of 1947. The new building was erected in the fall of 1952. The Library service has grown from a circulation of around one thousand a year to over sixteen thousand in 1954-55, proving its vital importance to the community and school district. Mrs. L. T. Weddle has continued as Chief Librarian.

The City Bands

The personnel of the Famous Ring Band included the Ring brothers; Bill, Henry, George, Gustave and Otto Rathgeber; the Drakes; the Suttons; Herbergers, Yeringtons, Gills, William and Ernest Schelb. There was a band concert every Saturday night and the town was jammed with rigs all around the square, where hitch racks were all around the park. This band went by train to cities all over Illinois, appearing at all kinds of entertainments.

After the first World War, the older men were no longer here and the band was reorganized. It was sponsored by the Girard Commercial Club with H. V. Stutsman as manager. This band also brought glory to Girard. Various directors were G. W. Rathgeber, Otto Rathgeber, Lonny Griffiths, and Guy McDowell. They appeared and played at the State Fair three consecutive years. They had the distinctive honor one year of leading the million dollar Sweepstakes livestock parade. An excellent quartette often sang with this band.

Chapter 15

Ringling Bros. Circus

One day in the 1880's the traditional loafers were on hand at the depot watching the trains go through town. On this day a circus train was due to pass through but on its appearance the loafers were amazed to see that the train was stopping on the switch. What's more, the engine and tender

were quickly uncoupled, and pulled away into the yards.

Several men, the Ringling Brothers themselves, hurried into the agent's office and begged him to get orders for the engineer to pull them to their destination for their next scheduled show. But this was denied them.

By the "grapevine" word immediately reached the Gazette office that the Ringling Brothers Circus was stranded here. George L. Tipton, editor of the Gazette, was busy setting type by hand. But he rushed over to the agent at the station and asked "where are the Ringling Brothers?"

"Over there are three of them," was the reply, as the agent motioned to three men. As Mr. Tipton listened to the story that they were out of money, not even having grain or meat for their animals, his mind was working on a lightning swift idea.

By this time other men including Mr. D. S. Macknett of the lumber yard came up. With one accord the Girard men went into a consultation and agreed with George Tipton that Girard could help the Ringling Brothers in this discouraging situation.

Tipton went back to the circus owners. "Get your strongest team and wagon out," he said. "Drive to the lumber yard and get a load of bridge lumber and build a bridge across the ditch at Center and Eighth street."

"Why?" asked the manager.

"Because you are going to put on a show there tonight," was the answer.

Tipton backed them for the hay and grain for the animals and got other merchants to promise help in the way of meat for the wild animals and food for the personnel. Tipton also made arrangements at a livery barn for four of the best saddle horses with riders to be sent out in the four directions telling to all the country-side that there would be a big circus in Girard that night.

The show was located in the 800 block west of the Catholic Church, the ground being owned by Mr. Tipton. The show was a huge success and Ringling Brothers were able to pay their bills and their train fare on to their destination.

The hospitality of the people of Girard was never forgotten by the cook in the cook tent of Ringling Brothers. Sam Sperry, who after a long run with the circus, quit in his old days and came to Girard with his wife to live in a house built on the same spot that the cook tent had been located, 818 W. Madison street.

After a few years we find in the issue of The Girard Gazette the announcement of the merger of Ringling Brothers and Van Amberg's United Monster Circus, Museum and Menagerie. And as Girard had helped them when they needed help, Girard was never forgotten. They returned on July 27, 1889, and put on two shows, afternoon and evening performances, 50¢ and 25¢ admission with a magnificent free street parade at 10 A. M.

The Greatest Show on Earth has recorded in its history the experience of the impromptu showing in Girard, Illinois, where it was put back on its feet. Ringling Brothers has never been bankrupt since. For his help, George Tipton received a life pass to all Ringling Brothers performances, a pass which he used often in future shows at Springfield.

Chapter 16

Annual Corn Carnival

Beginning in 1904, Girard sponsored for a period of several years an October exhibition known as the "Annual Corn Carnival". Every effort was made to promote this occasion as one of "merit, education and joy". "All roads led to Girard", and for two days the farmers drove in from miles around, citizens came by teams or train from the nearby towns, and the place was jammed with people.

The program for October 15 and 16, 1908, is an average example of a

program. Band concerts and music by the local Glee Club each day. Picnic dinner in the Park. Addresses of welcome by Atty. C. C. Terry and C. H. Metcalf. Addresses by Congressman Morris Shepherd of Texas, Lt. Gov. L. Y. Sherman, ex-Lt. Gov. W. A. Northcott, Prof. F. H. Rankin of State Agricultural College.

All sorts of events in athletic sports were held. There was a horse show and balloon races; stereoptican lectures, and above all, the exhibits of culinary art, fruit, vegetables, grain and poultry. All exhibits became the property of the management and were sold at auction after the Carnival.

Corn, with a Sweepstakes prize, was the total specialty of the occasion and the "corn king" was the man who carried away the honors. Farmers were so interested that they spent hours going up and down the rows of corn hunting for the tallest stalk, or the heaviest ear of corn. The horse show listed premiums on best span of mules, draft team, double team roadsters, single roadster, saddle horse or mare; showiest single turnout or double rig; showiest horseback rider; best lady horseback rider; best lady driver; best girl or boy rider.

Among those winning prizes were Clarence Kime, showiest turn out; Dr. F. A. Stewart, best gentleman rider; Miss Rose Fromme, best lady rider; Mrs. Clarence Kime, best lady driver; best boy rider under 16, Harrison Leach.

Among the winners in culinary department in young ladies and girls were Georgia Donaldson, Georgia Post and Ruby Smith.

Only a few concessions were allowed at the Carnival, and no "bawdy shows".

Chapter 17

Human Interest Stories

The first white child born in Girard was Leroy Mayfield, born in 1853, the son of Alfred S. Mayfield. The grandmother of Leroy was a half breed Cherokee girl named Della Gore. A sister of Leroy's was named Nellie Pocahontas. Leroy married Julius Hamilton's daughter, Mary. This lady is 94 years old and lives at Champaign, Illinois.

The oldest living person born in Girard is, to the best of our knowledge, Mrs. Carrie Macknett Howell, 90 years old.

The first death in the township was Thomas Warren in 1833. The first funeral in the city of Girard was that of Julius Rutherford, grandfather of Cecil Rutherford of near Girard. This funeral was held in the dwelling house just east of Dr. McKemie's office. Mr. Rutherford was the first man buried in Girard Cemetery. The first person buried there was Ella Morrison who died August 5, 1853. A Mrs. Klepper donated the first plot of ground for the cemetery, located north of the creek in the old part.

Illinois was swept by a plague of black cholera in 1852. Sam Boggess and his wife, widely known for their hospitality, adopted orphans left at this time. One of these was Catherine Howerton who became the wife of John C. Beeby in 1857. This couple were the grandparents of Howerton Tipton. For several years Mrs. Beeby had perhaps the only sewing machine around Girard. Many women drove to her home in wagons and stayed all day while she helped them with their sewing. Uncle Sam and Aunt Polly also raised Mrs. Ida Stone, the mother of Mrs. Ed Shroyer and Mrs. Dean England.

The slavery question was often discussed in Girard, but Uncle Tommy Warren was the only "secesh" in town.

The first coal brought to the surface from the Girard mine was presented to Daniel Macknett, President of the town in 1871, and the grandfather of Georgia Donaldson. Few people had ever seen coal, much less used it. Mrs. Macknett wished to surprise her husband and have a coal fire burning for him when he came home from work. She ordered her Irish maid to fill the stove with coal. Expecting a mild explosion of quick fire, Mrs. Macknett stood at arm's length from the stove to apply the match. Her other hand was held by the Irish woman who was to jerk her mistress to safety if necessary. The disappointment of no fire lasted the best part of the afternoon, but at last the persevering women had a "coal fire" burning.

When Wm. Eastham built his home where Mrs. Gladys Krebaum now lives, he sent for a man who could "witch" for water for his well. The location was marked and the diggers went to work. At the usual depth for water, no supply was reached. "There's water there, just keep digging until you hear the Devil's dogs bark," said the one who had "witched". True to his prediction, a never failing well was found. The local mine hauled water from this well whenever the mine pond went dry. And the cement for many miles of State Route No. 4 was mixed with water from this well.

A man named Davis was the first operator of the "Blue" Warehouse where Girard Feed Store is now located. He called himself a "lightning calculator". He kept a jug of liquor on hand for his customers. He aimed to short weight them 90 to 100 lbs. and have a check ready for them by the time the men were good natured from their treat and would not argue. Then, changing the picture—a Joseph McKinney succeeded Davis. He gave the late Henry Hamilton his first job in Girard. "I weighed for him for three years," said Mr. Hamilton. "When the scales broke between ten pounds, I was instructed always to give the 10 lbs. to the customer."

The first railroad engines going through Girard were wood burners. David Stead, father of Henry Stead, supplied the wood, hauling it to Nilwood where it was loaded onto the tender.

John Roach who settled on the edge of Girard in 1854 owned four yoke of oxen with which he broke the prairie sod for many a farmer. It required four yoke (eight animals) to pull a 24 inch plow in the unbroken sod. He broke virgin prairie as late as 1879. He also reported cutting saw logs on government land through the winter months one year, earning \$48. He considered this excellent pay. Mr. Roach bred short horned Durham cattle and received notices in the Chicago papers as an outstanding Illinois stock man in 1880.

L. W. Deck, father of Wyman Deck, related that when he came to Girard in 1874 the parcel of ground in the city park was a potato patch in which young maples had just been set. It was surrounded by a good board fence to keep the pigs and cows out, since such animals were quite likely to be straying around the town. In fact every property owner in those days surrounded his home with a fence of white pickets or of black ornamental iron.

In 1871 an Indian came to the Girard dentist, Frank Sage, and wanted a tooth pulled. Dr. Sage prided himself on his strength with the forceps, but he could not pull the tooth. The Indian laughed and said three other men had failed. He disappeared without any identification.

A German bootmaker was in town in these years. He made a good living for Girard was too muddy to wear shoes. Every man and boy wore boots. He made them with copper toes for an extra price.

When Chicago was burning in 1871, large groups of people were standing around in Girard talking about the disaster. Toward noon Mr. Babcock, the C. & A. agent, rushed out shouting for everyone to stay back from the tracks for a relief train was rushing through from St. Louis. The whole town soon heard the news and went running to see the sight. They heard the hum on the rails first, then saw the engine appear at Nilwood. There was a thunderous roar and the engine raced through town pulling two fire engines, each on a flat car. All was dead silence in Girard. Not a word was spoken for some time. Weeks later, when rebuilding in Chicago started, the Macknett lumber yard sold every piece of lumber they had to men from Chicago, as did every other lumber yard on the line.

A concert notice for a program in 1875 admonished, "Chewers of gum and eaters of gingerbread will refrain from soiling the freshly sanded floor." (That meant a floor which had literally been spread with sand.)

Mrs. Mary Bowersox Kime recalls that the first so-called "graduating class" from the Girard school numbered thirteen. John Ball's son dropped out of the class toward the end of the year. His reason was that the school should not be blighted by the graduation of an "unlucky" number.

Miss June Hamilton owns a handbill announcing an "Exhibition to be rendered by the pupils of the Girard High School on March 22 and 23, 1867" under the direction of Principal H. H. Keebler and music directed by Prof. M. Randall. On the second evening orations were to be given by such familiar names as Charles Metcalf, Hattie Shepherd, Harris Cherry. Albert Simmons, Charles Gibson and James Kitzmiller.

The Macoupin County Normal School, held in the years 1870 to 1880, held sessions of six weeks length each summer. This was held in Girard at least one summer when it was attended by Alice Beeby, who became Mrs. George L. Tipton. These Normal schools were organized by the teachers themselves to help them prepare to pass the teachers examinations required for the first time by the law of the state.

Mrs. J. H. Church recalls the romance of the "lantern" street lamps before electricity came to town in 1892. Old Mr. Drury went about at dusk, setting up his ladder at each lamp post, lighting the oil lamps.

In 1874 the Church of the Brethren of the United States held their Annual Meeting at Joseph Filbrun's bank-barn one mile north and one half mile east of town near the railroad. The barn is still standing, an old landmark. The C. & A. built a temporary switch and station at the farm and provided an agent for the four days. Five thousand people attended and the attendance swelled several more thousand on Sunday. A huge tent supplemented the barn for space. Meals were served, feeding 1,000 at a seating. On Sunday, thirty acres of land were covered with teams, wagons and rigs. The people slept in the homes and barns of the local members from Lake School in Montgomery County to Otter Creek in North Otter.

At a picnic in 1895 preparations were being made for a balloon ascension. A joker arranged the guide rope so that a heavy-set boy of about 14 stepped into it. When the balloon sailed away, the boy was lifted with it and carried as high as a two story building. Horrified, the people watched the dangling boy, then happily the rope wrapped around a store chimney, tilted the balloon, the gas escaped and the boy was rescued without permanent injury.

The Modern Woodman picnics around 1900 were great affairs. As many as four trains of visiting lodge members often came to town for the day. Wagons were sent to nearby towns to bring enough food to feed the people. The picnics brought hundreds of farm vehicles to town. The lots north of the Church of God were vacant except for a blacksmith shop. Scores of people hitched in this area.

Carrie Nation, the famous crusader for Temperance, once appeared in Girard at a Carnival. There were many saloons in town. One proprietor came out and presented her with a bottle of whiskey. She accepted it, and opening his door, threw the bottle in, breaking it on the floor. Then she walked over to the speaking stand and the steam calliope played the popular song "Good Morning, Carrie" in her honor, as she stepped up to give her lecture. This pleased her very much.

Runaways of horses were weekly occurrences. People were often badly injured and frequently killed in such an accident. Other times the runaway created only an exciting diversion which was more or less enjoyed. H. V. Stutsman related that his father's family were one time driving into town on a big frame wagon. At the Girard Cemetery, one of the girls raised an umbrella. The horses took fright and ran, bouncing the wagon several feet high over every block crossing in Center street. People on the square heard the noise and began to shout, "there they come". But the horses dashed on around the square and back out Center street toward home. The shout was changed to "there they go".

When the residence of G. A. Donaldson burned on the site now occupied by Mrs. Carrie Tietsort, the hand fire engine was being pulled pell-mell by 6 or 8 men. The engine stuck on one of the high street crossings, the apparatus separated and the men ran on to the fire without the engine. "Hey," yelled the bystanders, "you forgot the engine."

In the early days one barber shop in town had the special side line of a bath tub. The shoe shine boy heated the water for it in an old Indian stove.

Varieties of foods were unknown in the old days. Everyone ate what was raised in season. Money was not spent for anything but substantial basic foods. Mr. Macknett, the lumber dealer, often slipped over to a passenger train stopped at the station and bribed the waiters on the dining car to sell him oranges and bananas from their supplies.

In wet weather the mud around the square was hub deep on the wagons and it took four horses to pull a wagon through. In dry weather the horses' feet dragged the 2 to 4 inches of loose dust into great clouds that all but smothered the riders. For many years Girard owned a water sprinkler and sprinkled the square.

The first side walks in town were board walks. Because of the deep mud each street crossing was raised from one to two feet above the level of the street. The bouncing of all rigs over these crossings every block or two over town was a regular carnival ride that no one appreciated.

The Girard community produced a \$5,000.00 race horse around 1880. George Shroyer traded for a shaggy bay colt named Loafer. A Mr. Wolfe bought the colt for a work horse. Running in the pasture this colt showed its tremendous speed, and Mr. Wolfe began to train him for racing. A buyer came with \$10,000.00 in his pocket to buy Loafer, but Mr. Wolfe named the price of \$5,000.00 which was and would even yet be something for Girard.

Mr. Horace Rutherford laid out a race track on the south edge of Girard in the spring of 1880. He was training Roan Jack, a near relative of Loafer. A few years later there was a race track just north of town, and east of the railroad. For many years around the turn of the century, a carload of horses or ponies were sold every Saturday in Girard.

In 1880 the citizens of Girard subscribed the necessary money to secure the right of way for the Jacksonville Southeastern R. R. from Virden to this point. This was an important event, settling an extremely unjust discrimination in freight rates and providing the people with means of transportation in all directions.

The Illinois Terminal came through Girard early in the century and was considered a most convenient means of transportation with two hour service in either direction, continued until the age of the automobile.

When the Greenridge Mine was operating, two men left the Bank in Girard on pay day with a heavy suitcase containing the payroll in currency, followed by a guard. A livery rig took them to Greenridge, the guard following on horseback.

When Roscoe Hamilton graduated from High School he received from the President of the school board his be-ribboned diploma. "Thanks," he said, "I'll go see if I can't get a job on the section." He did get a job as fireman on a big freight locomotive. He became the President of the State Bank in 1938.

In the early days of this century, wealthy farmers drove the wagon into town about twice a year for supplies. An ordinary order was 5 to 8 barrels of flour, 400 to 500 lbs. sugar, 100 lbs. hominy, 100 lbs. of beans, 2 or 3 barrels of salt, a large bag of whole coffee beans, (they ground their own), and perhaps a 12 or 24 lb. butt of chewing tobacco.

Dr. Harry Hoxsey, a Girard boy famous now in Texas and Mexico for his "Cancer Cure", once performed the "human fly" act by climbing the front corner of the People's Bank building without protection.

The Odd Fellow Lodge was organized in Girard December 1855 with seven charter members. They have never failed to hold a "weekly meeting" in the one hundred years.

Verner Thompson, at the age of fourteen, owned a high diving cat called "Smarty". The training of this cat covered a period of several months. Verner started with a short ladder, the cat following him to the top. Then he tossed a piece of raw meat into the net and the cat jumped to procure the meat. Eventually the cat climbed the ladder alone, and Verner gradually added to the ladder until it reached a height of approximately 25 feet. This performance became a Sunday attraction and people came from miles around, most of them arriving in horse drawn buggies.

One day the net broke and after that instance. Verner had to go to each corner of the net and tug on the rope to show the cat the net was secure. The cat refused to jump until he performed that routine.

Chapter 18

The Future.

Girard citizens are forward looking. Because of the great need of an abundant local water supply, a drive was launched in the summer of 1954 to raise \$100,000.00 to apply on the building of a lake. The drive was successful. The lake location was three miles west of the city, and the name Sunset Lake was chosen for the site. The process of this important development progressed rapidly and is the greatest improvement ever undertaken by the people of the Girard community. From this will no doubt come undreamed of opportunities for building a greater Girard in the inviting century that lies ahead.

Centennial Notes

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